

PARSHAT BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI  
24 IYYAR 5781/06 MAY 2021



*The Tree of Life*  
Oil on canvass by Gustav Klimt

TO BE A STRANGER AND A DWELLER

1. "...you are strangers and dwellers with Me." (Leviticus 25:23)  
"I am a stranger and dweller with you..." (Genesis 23:4)
2. "...the land shall have a sabbath of complete rest."  
"...you must provide for redemption of the land."  
"...each of you shall return to your own original place (ahoozato), to your family."  
"...you shall proclaim release/flow of return for all the inhabitants of the land"  
(Leviticus 25:4, 24, 10)
3. "Since a man cannot pass beyond the final end of life, I want to set off into the mountains to establish my renown there." (*Epic of Gilgamesh*)
4. I would imitate travelers who, finding themselves lost in a forest, ought not to wonder this way or that, or, what is worse, remain in one place, but ought always walk as straight a line as they can in one direction and not change course...for by this mean...they will finally arrive at least somewhere where they will probably be better off than in the middle of the forest. (*Discourse on Method*, Rene Descartes)

5. “In the middle of life’s path I found myself in a dark forest, where the straight way was lost” (Dante, *Inferno* 1:1-3). It is precisely because Dante is moving in a straight line that he loses himself in the “selva oscura.” It is only in learning a more circuitous route that he finds his way out of the forest. (*Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, Robert Pogue Harrison)
  
6. When I was young and engaged in prayer to God in a forest or field, I would see a new world when I would return. The previous world had entirely disappeared, and its place was taken by a completely different world. (Rabbi Nachman)